



Media Advisory
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MILWAUKEE HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES CITIZENS to "FIGHT THE BITE!"

New Ad Campaign Aimed at Building Awareness of West Nile Virus

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) will launch an educational campaign directed to the general public to remind citizens to "Fight the Bite" as a prevention message aimed at limiting the occurrence of West Nile Virus (WNV) in the community. MHD sponsored "Fight the Bite" ads will run on the sides of 50 Milwaukee County operated transit buses through the end of September. Mayor Tom Barrett, Acting Health Commissioner Bevan K. Baker, other elected and health officials will **hold a press conference to kick-off this new effort on Tuesday, July 13, 2004 at Washington Park at 10:30 a.m.**

Health officials will outline current WNV-related activities designed to limit the spread of disease in the community, including targeted larvicide application, mosquito surveillance and trap placement within the City, and reporting networks to capture cases of WNV infection in humans. This season, 40 mosquito traps have been set up to assess levels of mosquito infection in the area.

West Nile virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire WNV from certain bird species that carry the virus. To date, no human cases of WNV have been reported in the state of Wisconsin. In addition, no mosquito pools tested have come back positive for WNV. However, 28 birds have tested positive for WNV in Wisconsin since May.

Only a small fraction of individuals bitten by an infected mosquito will become ill with WNV-related disease. Less than 1% of these individuals will progress to more serious neuroinvasive diseases including WNV-related encephalitis or meningitis. Symptoms of WNV infection include fever, malaise and muscle ache.

WNV infection can be avoided. Citizens are urged to follow precautionary measures including limiting outdoor activity during periods of peak mosquito activity (dusk and dawn), wearing long-sleeved clothing and pants, applying repellent containing DEET, and repairing holes in windows and door screens. Eliminating pools of stagnant water around or near the house or other buildings that serve as breeding habitats for mosquitoes is also being recommended, including emptying standing water in rain gutters, flower pots, cans, tires or other containers.

WHEN:	Tuesday, July 13, 2004
TIME:	10:30 a.m.
LOCATION:	Washington Park 40th and Lisbon Avenue
SPEAKERS:	Mayor Tom Barrett Bevan K. Baker, Acting Health Commissioner